

on Multiple Listing Service data for the last six months of 1999, the average price for a house within the Project Corridor increased 82 percent to \$210,000.

An increase in the size of new residential subdivisions is a noticeable trend. Subdivisions of 15 to 20 homes were common at the writing of the 1996 FEIS. Now large master planned communities containing 150 to 1,200 homes, golf courses and community facilities are planned, under construction or are developed. These larger planned residential developments capitalize on economies of scale to reduce unit costs to achieve higher housing value at lower cost. The influx of larger developments such as Broken Arrow in Lockport serve to maintain reasonable housing costs in the Project Corridor to satisfy demand in the northeastern Illinois for affordable lower density, suburban style housing. Similar developments ranging in size from 500 to 1,200 homes are planned in the Villages of Bolingbrook and New Lenox and in Homer Township.

Region-wide, NIPC projects that an estimated 1,295 to 1,554 square kilometers (500 to 600 square miles) of land will be required between 1990 and 2020 to accommodate growth projected for northeastern Illinois [\(ACG, 2000\)](#). Geographically, the Project Corridor represents one of the last areas open for development within a 48 kilometer (30 mile) radius of the Chicago central area. Developing this area would be consistent with NIPC regional development goals of keeping the urbanized areas compact by focusing development as close as possible to the Chicago urban core [\(NIPC, 1998\)](#).

2.4 Socio-Economic Characteristics

2.4.1 Community Description

The 1996 FEIS described the overall community character of the Project Corridor as consisting of mature incorporated cities developed with higher density uses surrounded by unincorporated rural area undergoing lower density residential development.

Since publication of the 1996 FEIS, the strong economy combined with moderate housing prices and location near regional job centers has stimulated considerable growth within the Project Corridor. Municipal annexation has reduced the extent of unincorporated rural areas within the Project Corridor. Residential development has occurred both within and between urban areas. The Project Corridor is rapidly transitioning from rural to suburban as planned by local government. Between 1990 and 1999, developed area increased 129 percent within the Project Corridor and is expected to account for 73 percent of Project Corridor development based on Will County and local land use plans.

2.4.2 Population Projection

Trends to Date

The population forecasts available and used for the 1996 FEIS used 1990 U.S. Census data as the base. The Study Area forecasts (for six townships including DuPage, Homer, Joliet, Lockport, New Lenox and Lemont/Downers Grove Townships) were taken from regional forecasts prepared and adopted by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC). Since the submission of the 1996 FEIS, there have been many changes to and refinements of these data. They include:

- Forecast data now is taken to 2020 instead of 2010.

- Township census estimates for 1998 show that the 2010 population forecasts shown in the 1996 FEIS for the Study Area (six townships) had already been achieved.
- 1999 Census estimates for all counties in Illinois show that Will County had surpassed its 2010 forecast. Furthermore, its numeric population change between 1990 and 1999 was the largest in the state, and the third-highest percentage change. DuPage County had the second-largest numeric change for the same period.
- Cook County had the fourth-largest numeric growth from 1990 to 1999, but the 49th highest percentage. Numeric growth in Cook County has been flat since 1996.

Although the overall 2010 population forecasts for the six-county region remain approximately on target, the distribution is quite different. Growth in the City of Chicago and the urbanized area of Cook County is limited, while suburban growth is greater than forecasted. This is due primarily to the scarcity of developable land in the former and its availability in the latter. However, while Will County population growth is approximately double that originally forecast, it is the older, mature areas that have spurred that growth with Joliet, Lockport and New Lenox growing well-beyond forecasts.

Table 2-4 adds the 1998 Census estimates for townships and 1999 Census estimates for

Table 2-4 Existing and Projected Population of the General Study Area								
	Population		Change 1990-2010		1998 Census Estimate	1990-1998 Change No.	1990-1998 % Change	1999 Census Estimate
	1990	2010	Number	Percent				
Region by County								
Cook	5,105,067	5,567,400	462,333	9%	5,196,396	87,329	2%	5,196,326
DuPage	781,666	985,600	203,934	26%	880,996	99,330	13%	892,547
Will	357,313	472,400	115,087	32%	460,225	102,912	29%	478,392
County Total	6,244,046	7,025,400	781,354	12.5%	6,533,617	289,571	5%	6,563,265
Townships								
DuPage	55,444	92,883	37,439	68%	75,210	19,766	36%	-
Homer	21,464	30,808	9,344	44%	26,294	4,830	23%	-
Joliet	84,243	85,102	862	1%	100,767	16,524	20%	-
Lockport	32,336	38,377	6,041	19%	41,553	9,217	29%	-
New Lenox	20,716	23,775	3,059	15%	28,322	7,606	37%	-
Lemont/ Downers Grove ⁽¹⁾	20,272	28,302	8,030	40%	27,280	7,008	35%	-
Township Total	234,475	299,250	64,775	28%	299,426	64,951	28%	-
Will Co. Townships	214,203	270,948	56,745	27%	272,146	57,943	27%	-
Percent of Will Co.	60%	57%	-	-	59%	56%	-	-

Source: Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and U.S. Bureau of Census (1990, 1998, 1999)

(1) Includes Lemont Township in Cook County and the southern portion of Downers Grove Township in DuPage County.

12/18/00

Table 2-5 Population Estimates of Illinois Counties For July 1, 1999, and Population Change: April 1,1990 to July 1, 1999 (ranked by percent population change)						
					County Rank in State	
	Population Estimate 7/1/99	Population Estimate 4/1/90 Census	Numeric Population Change 1990-99	Percent Population Change 1990-99	Numeric Population Change 1990-99	Percent Population Change 1990-99
State						
Illinois	12,128,370	11,430,602	697,768	6.1%	NA	NA
County						
Kendall County	53,659	39,413	14,246	36.1%	9	1
McHenry County	246,812	183,241	63,571	34.7%	6	2
Will County	478,392	357,313	121,079	33.9%	1	3
Boone County	39,560	30,806	8,754	28.4%	13	4
Kane County	402,622	317,471	85,151	26.8%	5	5
Monroe County	27,289	22,422	4,867	21.7%	17	6
Johnson County	13,598	11,347	2,251	19.8%	22	7
Lake County	617,975	516,418	101,557	19.7%	3	8
Brown County	6,918	5,836	1,082	18.5%	33	9
Grundy County	37,181	32,337	4,844	15.0%	18	10
Bond County	17,155	14,991	2,164	14.4%	24	11
DuPage County	892,547	781,689	110,858	14.2%	2	12
Cook County	5,192,326	5,105,044	87,282	1.7%	4	49

Source: The al Chalabi Group, Ltd (2000) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and U.S. Bureau of Census (1990, 1999)

counties to the 1996 FEIS forecast table. Table 2-5 shows the Illinois counties ranked by numeric and percent population change (1990-1999).

Regional Forecasts to 2020

The NIPC socio-economic forecasts to the year 2020 were developed in the spring of 1997. They incorporated three refinements to the forecast methodology employed in the 1996 FEIS.

- The first internalized the interrelationship between socio-economic forecast and the resultant transportation plan.
- The second was the development of two ground transportation improvement alternatives.
- The third was the assumption of two scenarios to meet the region's future aviation needs.

Prior to the 2020 planning cycle, NIPC generated its socio-economic forecasts. The Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) used the NIPC socio-economic forecasts to evaluate alternative transportation plans and to recommend a plan for adoption. The

adopted transportation plan then became one of the inputs used by NIPC to generate the next cycle of its socio-economic forecasts.

The 2020 RTP cycle integrated these two processes. It started with an initial set of socio-economic forecasts, which were used to generate alternative transportation improvements which, in turn, generated the socio-economic forecasts that would result if the proposed improvements were implemented. Determining the interrelationships between transportation improvements and urban development has been made possible by the adaptation, by NIPC, of the DRAM/EMPAL forecasting model and the availability, at CATS, of a sketch (quick-responding) transportation model, called the Combined Model.

The two ground transportation Alternatives examined building or not building the region's ground transportation improvements as described in the RTP. The first set assumed no transportation improvements beyond those already committed in 1996; this was referred to as the "No-RTP Alternative". The second set assumed the implementation of all the ground transportation improvements recommended in the 2020 RTP; this was referred to as the "RTP Alternative".

While the two ground transportation Alternatives were developed to test the impacts on growth of building or not building the region's proposed transportation projects, the two airport scenarios were developed to address how the region would address its future aviation needs. The two airport development scenarios evaluated were:

- The Existing Airport Scenario accommodates all the forecast 2020 enplanements (82.3 million) at the two existing airports, O'Hare and Midway.
- The South Suburban Airport Scenario accommodates the 82.3 million enplanements at O'Hare, Midway and the region's proposed third airport, the South Suburban Airport.

A total of four Alternative forecasts were prepared for the Study Area. Table 2-6 shows these four population forecasts.

Table 2-6						
2020 Population Forecasts for Project Study Area Build/No-Action and Alternative Airports Scenarios						
Airport Scenario	2020 Project Study Area Population			Growth 1990-2020		Difference
	1990	No-Action	Full Build	No-Action	Full Build	No-Action – Full Build
Existing	472,935	859,951	852,472	387,016	379,537	-7,479
South Suburban	472,935	910,090	898,064	437,155	425,129	-12,026

Source: The al Chalabi Group, Ltd. (2000) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission

While the impact on the Study Area of building versus not building a supplemental airport is approximately a positive 12 or 13 percent, the impact of building versus not building the RTP was a negative 1.9 percent for the Existing Airports Scenario and a negative 2.8 percent for the South Suburban Airport Scenario. In any case, however, the Study Area will experience very substantial growth between 1990 and 2020-with or without the RTP and independent of which airport scenario is undertaken. The population of the

Study Area will nearly double; a substantial portion of the 2020 forecast population growth already is in place, and the 2010 forecast of the 1996 FEIS has been achieved.

Population Forecasts Under Project Build/No-Action Alternatives

The analysis undertaken for this SFEIS went one step further determining Alternative impacts. A supplemental study was undertaken to estimate the specific impacts attributable to the I-355 South Extension and I-80 Improvement. The study, The Socio-Economic and Land Use Impacts of the Proposed I-355 Extension (Appendix A), examines the impacts on population and employment growth of building or not building the I-355 South Extension. A Study Area of 13 full townships was constructed. Within this Study Area, a smaller corridor (of one Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) on either side) was defined. The findings were:

- The impacts of the more-narrowly defined Study Corridor are greater than those of the larger Study Area, although both are small.
- The I-355 South Extension and I-80 Improvement concentrate growth within a narrow band and draw from the areas further west and south.
- The net population impact within the Study Area is 1,311 persons, under the Existing Airports Scenario and 2,669 under the South Suburban Airport Scenario. This constitutes 0.3 percent and 0.6 percent of the 1990 to 2020 forecast population growth, respectively.

2.4.3 Employment Projection

Trends to Date

Employment forecasts of the 1996 FEIS used 1985 as the base and were projected to 2010. While employment forecasts were made by NIPC for the entire six-county region, forecasts were not available for individual counties and Study Area. Since the 1996 FEIS submission, the employment data has been changed and refined in a manner similar to that of the population forecasts previously described. The changes include the following:

- Forecast data are taken to 2020 instead 2010.
- New 2020 employment forecasts, for the six-county region, are approximately 14 percent higher than those originally forecast. This is due to the complete recovery of the regional economy and the extraordinary performance of the national economy.
- New employment forecasts are available at the TAZ level. 1997 rough estimates are available for the entire Study Area.
- The latter estimates indicate that while the Study Area population had growth faster than forecast, its job development has not kept pace.

Alternative Regional and Study Area Forecasts to 2020

The region and Study Area employment forecasts made by NIPC employed the four alternative population sets previously described:

- RTP Build/RTP No-Action
- Existing Airports/South Suburban Airport

Table 2-7 shows these four employment forecasts.

The employment impact difference on the Study Area between building and not building the South Suburban Airport is a positive 8 or 10 percent. The difference on the Study Area between building or not building the RTP is a negative 8 or 7 percent, respectively. The reasons for this are described more fully in the Appendix A report.

Table 2-7 2020 Employment Forecasts for Project Study Area Build/No-Action and Alternative Airports Scenarios						
Airport Scenario	2020 Project Study Area Employment			Growth 1990-2020		Difference
	1990	No-Action	Full Build	No-Action	Full Build	No-Action - Full Build
Existing	143,036	302,352	290,019	159,316	147,055	-12,261
South Suburban	143,036	315,414	304,109	172,378	161,073	-11,305

Source: The al Chalabi Group, Ltd. (2000) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission

Employment Forecasts under Project Build/No-Action Alternatives

The forecast alternatives for the Supplement to the 1996 FEIS also assessed the specific impacts attributable to the I-355 South Extension and the I-80 improvement. These impacts are described in greater detail in the Appendix A report, The Socio-Economic and Land Use Impacts of the Proposed I-355 Extension. These findings were:

- The Project-Build creates a small number of jobs more than the No-Action Alternative. The increase of 168 jobs is the same for both airport Alternatives.
- This incremental growth of 0.1 percent of the total Study Area job growth is located at the major interchange of I-355 and I-80.

2.4.4 Demographics

The Project Corridor age profile remained relatively unchanged between 1990 and 1998, with the 18 to 65 group representing over 60 percent of the population remaining the largest age group. Census data for 1990 did show a slight increase in the 5 to 18 age group, reversing a declining trend since 1980 and a positive indicator of population growth.

Income data presented in the 1996 FEIS, compiled from the 1990 U.S. Census, found the higher per capita income levels within the developing unincorporated areas of Homer, New Lenox and DuPage townships. Incomes within these areas were classified at the middle and upper-middle levels. The lowest per capita incomes were found in the older communities of Joliet and Lockport, which were classified in the lower and lower-middle levels. Exhibit 2-8 maps 1990 U.S. Census poverty level by census block. Poverty level is based on Department of Health and Human Services poverty thresholds. Poverty thresholds are determined based on household income and family size.